

# County Line

News from the Government Offices of Lumpkin County, Georgia

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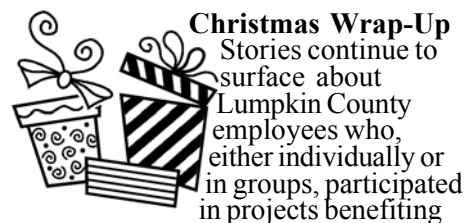
December 2008



## Markets Down—for Recycling

Evidence of the economic downturn is turning up everywhere. The latest casualty: the recycling industry. Not so surprising if you think about it. Carpet sales down? There goes the market for recycled plastics. Auto sales at a standstill? There goes the recycled can market. Newspaper and magazine pages are down and Asian and Indian recycling markets are closed. So who needs all the cereal boxes and cardboard? Through its membership in the North Georgia Resource Management Authority, along with Union, Towns and Banks Counties, Lumpkin County has built a strong recycling program and hosts Georgia's first regional recycling facility. That's why the recent collapse of the industry is so discouraging, says authority director Leslie George. But, like other commodities, the market for recyclables is cyclical. The industry will be strong again as the economy improves, and Leslie continues to look for opportunities to sell recyclable materials. In the meantime, though, the ability to move them out of the county changes almost daily. The center will remain open and limited recycling will continue during this transitional period only if residents follow the new temporary requirements.

As of press time, and until further notice, Lumpkin County is not accepting any plastics. Newspapers, magazines, junk mail and office paper (white only—not brown or colored) are still being accepted, but not cardboard or the kinds of cartons and boxes that hold cereal, crackers and beverage 12-packs. Drink and food cans were still being accepted, but that was subject to change. The trailer located at the transfer station will be removed when full and not replaced. Watch for updates in The Dahlonega Nugget and at [www.ngrma.org](http://www.ngrma.org). Signage will be posted at the recycling bins by Lumpkin County High School and at the Recycling Center on Red Oak Flats Road.



## Christmas Wrap-Up

Stories continue to surface about Lumpkin County employees who, either individually or in groups, participated in projects benefiting children and families in need this holiday season, from food donations to the Community Helping Place to gift donations for the annual White Christmas program. Here's another heartwarmer: Shop with Emergency Services. This year, the annual Shop with a Cop program grew into a multi-agency program that raised more than \$14,000 and paired 72 children with emergency services personnel for a morning of Christmas shopping at the Dahlonega Wal-Mart. Participants included the Lumpkin County Sheriff's Office, Lumpkin County Fire/EMS, 911 Communications, Citizens Law Enforcement Academy Advisory Board, North Georgia College & State University Police Department and the Georgia State Patrol. Special thanks to Wal-Mart for holding a reception for the kids, providing a \$2,500 grant and helping make the event an occasion to remember for all involved.

## Meetings on the Calendar

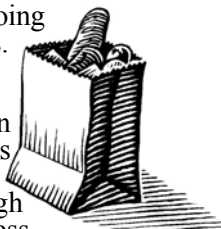
The schedule of regular meetings of the Lumpkin County Board of Commissioners will remain the same in 2009 as last year's schedule. Work sessions will be held at 9am the first Thursday of each month. The purpose of these non-voting meetings is to set the agenda for the regular board meetings. Regular Board of Commissioners meetings are held at 6pm the third Thursday of each month. Of course, there's an exception to every rule: Since the first Thursday of January is a holiday, January's meetings will be held on the second and fourth Thursdays. All of these regularly scheduled meetings are held at Dahlonega City Hall on Riley Road (thanks to the generosity of the Dahlonega City Council). Citizens may request that the board consider items for addition to the agenda by completing a form available in the Board of Commissioners office. This form must be submitted at least one full week before the upcoming work session. Call 706-864-3742 for details.



## Gifts of Food

Lumpkin County government has had a fun holiday tradition going for a number of years.

With generous donations from local businesses, a mountain of small and large gifts was collected, and each employee, through a ticket drawing process, went home from the annual Christmas party with a present. This Christmas, Frances French, deputy planning director, had a better idea. Why not change the focus from receiving to giving and give employees an easy and convenient way to donate to others in need? When the idea for a food drive made it to the board of commissioners office, it got a 'thumbs up' from the commissioners and county manager Stan Kelley, and Debbie Stover took the project on, coordinating with department heads to make it happen. At the county Christmas party December 19, Debbie was able to announce that Lumpkin County employees had donated 36 complete family Christmas dinners (482 pounds)—plus 208 additional pounds of miscellaneous food items—to the Community Helping Place Food Pantry. A handful of lucky ticket holders went home from the party with some very nice donated gifts, too, but everyone went home knowing the joy of being part of a giving, caring organization. Who knows? Maybe Christmas 2008 marked the start of a new Lumpkin County tradition.



## Local Economic Stimulus

The Lumpkin County Judicial Center under construction between Riley Road and Mechanicsville Road in Dahlonega is proving to be an economic stimulus package of its own for the local community. Encouraged by the Board of Commissioners, Clough, Harbor & Associates and Winter Construction have made every effort to involve local companies and contractors in the \$14 million project. A total of 14 local businesses and their employees and subcontractors had already benefited from the work by the end of 2008.



The public is encouraged to attend commission meetings to see their local government at work.

## Lumpkin County . . . continued from reverse side



### Grant Aimed at Mohawk Job Replacement

The process is slow, with real estate sales and company relocations at a crawl these days, but efforts to sell the huge Mohawk Industries building in Dahlonega continue. Local leaders hope the building will be sold to a tax paying private company with jobs to offer the community. The Lumpkin County Development Authority is working with local and state officials to market the building and recently received a \$25,000 grant from the Georgia Department of Labor to help with that effort. The funds are being used to acquaint qualified real estate and business relocation professionals with the building first hand and for state and national advertising.

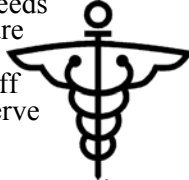
### Ambulance Donations Needed

Plans are in the making for a major effort to raise \$50,000—the local match needed to receive a \$50,000 grant from The Timken Foundation, an independent foundation supporting projects in communities hosting Timken Co. manufacturing plants. The grant and matching funds, together with a \$100,000 donation from the foundation, will be used to purchase a sorely needed new ambulance for Lumpkin County Fire/EMS. Details of the fundraising campaign will be announced soon, but don't let that hold up your donation. Make checks payable to Lumpkin County Fire/EMS (indicate "ambulance donation" on check) and mail to 99 Courthouse Hill, Dahlonega, GA 30533 or drop off at the Board of Commissioners office in the county courthouse. Please provide a return address. For details, call 706-864-3030.



### Progress Report: New Health Department Building

With the new year comes completion of the site work for Lumpkin County's new health Department building on Mechanicsville Road in Dahlonega. Architects and engineers have been putting to paper the results of hours of committee meetings to design a building that will meet the needs of healthcare consumers and the staff who will serve them. The committee includes representatives from the county's board of commissioners, finance and grants administration department and public works department, as well as health department staff and a citizen representative. Specifications for the new facility will likely be complete by the middle of January. Once the board of commissioners reviews and approves a set of specs, they'll be ready for the next step—making some important decisions about how the project will be bid out and managed.



### A Bare Bones Budget

As the county's new budget year kicks off, 2009 promises only to be a year of financial uncertainty. Even with expenses scaled back to the bare bones, there's no guarantee that revenues will be sufficient to cover them over the course of the entire year. That's because much of the county's revenue comes from property taxes, sales taxes and a variety of licenses and permits. The amount of those monies collected—and when they are collected—depends heavily on the economy. To meet the challenges, the county will be monitoring

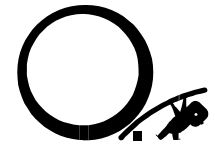
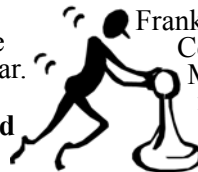


### Judicial Center Update

As the final touches are put on the grading and site development for the new Lumpkin County Judicial Center, attention is now on the foundation. Commissioners approved a \$1.6 million payment to the construction company in December for the cast in-place concrete, metal trusses and structural steel that will bring shape to the building this winter. That amount was a healthy \$30,000 to \$40,000 under budget for that phase of work, thanks to the "guaranteed maximum price" model of construction management guiding the project. The color scheme for the building's interior has been selected. It is a sophisticated palate of natural, earthy colors, punctuated by maroon and green accents. Next, the architectural and mechanical plans will be presented to the board of commissioners for approval. The Judicial Center is expected to be completed in about a year.

### Strategic Plan Adopted

Sometimes, an initiative accomplishes what it was intended to accomplish. Sometimes, it does that and more. Such was the case with the three-year Strategic Plan the Lumpkin County Board of Commissioners approved in December. A year-long process guided by revenues more closely and making any necessary budget adjustments more frequently. Contingency plans are already in place to address various levels of cutbacks if needed, so the county is ready to respond quickly and deliberately to changing conditions. To learn more about the 2009 budget, stop by the commissioner's office in the county courthouse and pick up a copy of the *FY09 Budget in Brief*, a summary of the county's annual operating and capital budget.



### Working for You!

If you have a problem, question or concern involving your county government, answers and assistance are as close as your phone or computer. For contact information for county departments or commissioners, see Dept. and Contact Info., [www.lumpkincounty.gov](http://www.lumpkincounty.gov) or call (706) 864-3742.

### Board of Commissioners

Steve Gooch, Chairman  
Dr. John Raber, District 1  
Deborah Hutcheson, District 2  
Clarence Stowers, District 3  
Clarence Grindle, District 4

Stan Kelley  
County Manager

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Frank Foster of the Center of Strategic Management melded input from key county stakeholders (taxpayers, businesses, children, county employees, city of Dahlonega), commissioners, department heads and county manager Stan Kelley. The goal was to develop a set of core strategies to guide the government in meeting the needs of stakeholders, to develop specific actions to support the strategies and to develop measures to track the plan's success. These goals were accomplished, and citizens will see portions of the plan—mostly the low- and no-cost portions—being implemented beginning this year. Beyond that, Stan says, the level of interdepartmental cooperation needed to develop the strategic plan strengthened the county's management team and gave them new tools and ways to work together going forward.